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231 them. They plant a particular sort of tree to breed them on. The insects consist of a soft brown shell full of a mass of very minute grubs. Some of these are kept for breeding and are put into little bundles of straw and fastened on to the tree. These little grubs after about a month come out of the shell and spread all over the tree. In a year's time each of these has produced its nest of grubs, and the crop is gathered and sold to men who come chiefly from Ssŭ-ch'uan and Hu-nan. The price is 20 taels (about £3) for a man's load of 50 or 60 lbs. of insects.

The load being so valuable, great care is taken that the grubs should not be prematurely hatched out of their shell by the heat. The porters travel very quickly and only in the cool of the night. On arrival at their homes in Eastern Ssŭ-ch'uan or Hu-nan, they place the insects out on another sort of tree, and in course of time they come out of the shell and spread over the tree and produce wax. When the deposit is complete, as much as possible is scraped off, and the branches are then boiled so as to extract every particle of wax.

373 The white wax which these insects produce is much valued as it will stand a greater heat without melting than any other substance of this sort. It is used therefore principally in the manufacture of candles, as an outer coating to prevent the candle guttering. The gathering and selling of the crop of insects was in full swing as we passed through this part of the country at the end of April[1].

The next day we crossed the Niu-lan Chiang which is only 40 yards wide at the San-tao-kuai ferry but has a strong current and runs in a deep gorge. This river, which is the outlet of the Yang-lin Lake, is navigated by boats in some parts of its course. It forms here the boundary between Kuei-chou and Yün-nan, so that we were now again in the latter province after having been for the last twelve days in Kuei-chou.

328 The inhabitants of San-tao-kuai get their living by smelting zinc. The zinc ore is placed in conical shaped earthenware cups. When heated, the zinc rises from the ore in the shape of gas and collects on a sort of shelf inside

[1] For a full account of the White Wax Insect see Hosie's *Three Years in Western China*, Chapter XI.

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000 between the little Chiang-ch'uan Lake and the hills to the east of it, just at the point where a stream connecting it with the Ch'êng-chiang Hai forces its way through these hills.

The village has some nice trees and looks well from a distance: inside are the usual pigs and dirt. Its height is just under 6000 feet, the first time for six weeks I had camped at such a low elevation.

On the 18th, crossing a low range of hills, we descended to the lake of T'ung Hai, and, rounding its eastern end, 241 reached the town of that name. The plain round the lake •373 is well cultivated and there is a ring of large villages round it. The town though not very big is decidedly prosperous and has a good deal of trade. We found kerosine oil in general use here for lamps, a sign that we were approaching the civilisation of Tong-king.

From here Turner and I separated, his road branching off in a more westerly direction. Ker had left us two days previously to find a way from Chin-ning to T'a-lang, thus getting more country surveyed than we otherwise should have done.

316 Turner and Ker met at T'a-lang and were able to visit the gold mine, which they found a productive one in spite of the very crude machinery used. After this they had a most trying journey over roads rendered nearly impassable by heavy rains. They followed up the course of the Pa-pien Chiang (Black River) for several days, turning westward from near the south end of the Ching-tung T'ing plain. Ker crossed the Mekong to Yün Chou, and from there went northward to Ta-li Fu, where he met Turner, who had come there by a more direct route. They did not reach Burma till August. Travelling in Yün-nan in the rains is not a pleasant experience. It was quite an exceptional circumstance for them not to be wet to the skin on every march, and their rate of progress was sometimes not more than a mile an hour.

136 It had rained almost unceasingly since we left Yün-nan Fu, so it was pleasant to start the next morning in fine weather, with the cheerful call of the Chinese francolin all round us. This bird closely resembles the painted partridge of southern India, and is the common partridge of Burma